



April 18, 2017

## **KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-17-39**

### **SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program–2017 Kansas Wildfire Initiative**

**Action required by:** April 24, 2017 (Field Offices [FOs])  
June 2, 2017  
July 14, 2017

June 9, 2017 (Area Offices [AOs])  
July 28, 2017

**Purpose:** Provide guidance on administering the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Kansas Wildfire Initiative available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

**Expiration Date:** September 30, 2017

#### **Background**

The 2017 Kansas Wildfire Initiative is a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) effort to assist agricultural producers in remediating resource concerns resulting from the effects of recent widespread wildfires that occurred in March of 2017. These wildfires burned over 700,000 acres of Kansas grasslands. In addition to substantial loss of property, producers in the wildfire areas are now faced with land that has degraded plant condition, degraded wildlife habitat, lack of livestock water, as well as wind erosion concerns. This initiative will provide financial and technical assistance to producers to address these resource concerns.

#### **Project Location**

Land affected by the March 2017 wildfires in the counties of Clark, Comanche, Ellis, Ellsworth, Ford, Hodgeman, Lane, Lincoln, McPherson, Meade, Ness, Reno, Rice, Rooks, Russell, Seward, and Smith, may be eligible for financial assistance under the 2017 Kansas Wildfire Initiative.

#### **EQIP Eligible Land Uses, Resource Concerns, Conservation Practices, and Ranking Criteria.**

Eligible Land Uses, Resource Concerns, Conservation Practices, and Ranking Criteria are available in Attachment 1.

#### **EQIP Application Cutoff**

Applications can now be taken on a continuous basis throughout the FY. Application evaluation cutoff date for FY 2017 is set for **April 21, 2017**.

(more)

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Immediately after the application evaluation cutoff date, applicants requiring eligibility determinations processed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) (see Title 440-Conservation Program Manual (CPM), Part 512, Subpart C, Section 512.24) will be notified by mail with a Program Eligibility Certification Letter. A template letter can be found in ProTracts or 440-CPM, Part 512, Subpart J, Section 512.91.

The participant must file or update the required certifications within 30 days of receipt of this letter for NRCS to consider the application for funding. If eligibility status of the participant is not updated within the 30 day period, the application will be determined ineligible.

If ineligibility is confirmed, the participant must be notified by certified mail using the Ineligibility Determination for Conservation Program Contract Letter. A template of this letter can be found in ProTracts or in 440-CPM, Part 512, Subpart J, Section 512.93. The application status in ProTracts must be changed to “ineligible”.

### **ProTracts Application Data**

The following ProTracts application data entry is specific to this project:

- **Program** – “EQIP 2014”
- **Application FY** – “2017”
- **Application Type** – “State”
- **FA Fund Code** – “2017 Kansas Wildfire Initiative”
- **Cost List** – “EQIP-AWCI”

### **Payment Schedule**

A separate Payment Schedule including specific practice limitation for this initiative is included in Attachment 2.

### **Deadlines**

The following actions will be completed for all eligible applications by **April 24, 2017**:

- Application information entered in ProTracts:
  - Program
  - Application FY
  - Sign-up Date
  - Servicing Office
  - Location County
  - Applicant(s)
  - Application Status (pending, eligible, ineligible, or cancelled)
  - Fund Code
- Applications will be changed to “eligible” status if the following have been completed:
  - All participants entered in Protracts with:
    - Participant AGI certification flag “Y” in ProTracts
    - Participant HEL and WC certification flag “Y” in ProTracts
    - FTE certification flag “Y” in Protracts
    - Required DUNS entered in ProTracts
    - Vender information loaded matching 1199a with “Active” status vendor in ProTracts
    - Signature Authority documentation on file
  - All necessary COL affidavits on file

Applications will remain in “pending” status until all participant and land eligibility requirements have been met. Applications not received by the application cutoff date will be left in “pending” status. Applications still in “pending” status after **June 2, 2017**, will not be considered for funding during this cutoff period.

Conservation plans will be completed, signed, and uploaded to ProTracts; and applications ranked in ProTracts by **June 2, 2017**. Applications not supported with a participant signed Application Ranking Summary by June 2, 2017 will be changed to pending status and not be considered for funding during the current cutoff period.

Application evaluation peer reviews will be completed by **June 9, 2017**. Assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTC-FO) shall ensure that all application evaluations (rankings) are peer reviewed (per Title 440-CPM, Part 512, Subpart C, Section 512.25[C][2][iii]) prior to preapproval of applications.

Funding decisions will be completed by the Environmental Quality Initiative Program (EQIP) manager as soon as application peer review has been completed. All approved applications and contract documentation will be entered in the Document Management System (DMS) for second level review of obligation by **July 14, 2017**.

Assistant state conservationists for field operations will ensure all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by **July 28, 2017**.

**Contact:** Forward all questions through established channels to Joel A. Willhoft, Resource Conservationist at [joel.willhoft@ks.usda.gov](mailto:joel.willhoft@ks.usda.gov) or by calling (785) 624-3127.

*(signed)*

ERIC B. BANKS  
State Conservationist

Attachments